



Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Supervisor Patricia Jursik, District 8

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Contact: Bill Zaferos, Public Information Manager

414/278-4230 or William.zaferos@milwaukeecountywi.gov

SUPERVISOR JURSIK SAYS COUNTY ARENA FUNDING PLAN IS “UNCONSCIONABLE”

Supervisor Patricia Jursik issued the following statement today on the funding of a new downtown arena:

“The community of Milwaukee has a strong desire to keep the Milwaukee Bucks and to find a way to build a new, modern downtown arena. But the current deal for Milwaukee County that rests on debt collection to pay for bonding on the arena cannot stand.

“Simply stated, ‘bad debt’ is not a revenue stream. It is an unconscionable trick, not a resource. It is a con game of ‘hide the ball.’ The ball is largely property tax, whether garnered from diverting debt collections from the county's collection of delinquent property taxes or other court judgments to pay bond liability for the new arena. This collection would have otherwise off set property taxes in the budget. Additionally, if there is shortfall of the ‘bad debt’ collections, shared revenue from the state earmarked for Milwaukee will be diverted to pay this shortfall. This, too, translates into property tax dollars or additional loss of services, likely shorting our parks and cultural assets such as the Milwaukee County Zoo or the Milwaukee Public Museum that ultimately depend on property tax support. Any way you want to describe this shell game, funding will fall on property taxes, already the single most burdensome tax on our local residents.

“This is even more alarming to my south shore district of four lake shore cities, all outside of the City of Milwaukee, namely St. Francis, Cudahy, South Milwaukee and Oak Creek. Nearly one-fourth of the foreclosure collections would come from these four cities. Since Milwaukee County's collection of ‘bad debt’ through foreclosure does not include any of the City of Milwaukee, all of this ‘bad debt’ revenue would come only from county suburban communities. This is both inequitable to my district and may well be a denial of their equal protection property rights.

“The County Executive's deal is unconscionable since this ‘bad debt’ collection will fall mostly on the poor, the elderly, those suffering medical setback or loss of a job. Does the Buck's organization really want to be associated with such a deal? I call on the Bucks owners in the spirit of the generous gift of Herb Kohl to return to the bargaining table and get a real financing plan finalized. Does the ‘Head of the Herd,’ the Bucks development group, want to be seen as a stampeding herd of hungry bucks trampling the elderly and vulnerable down an unbeaten path in their quest for riches in the heartland?”

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